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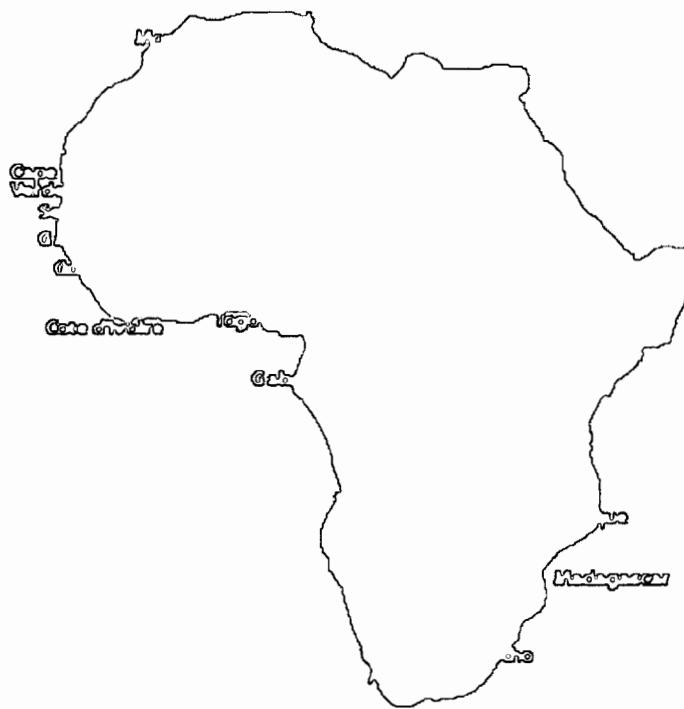
ABSTRACT

The Water in Africa Project was realized over a 2-year period by a team of Peace Corps volunteers. As part of an expanded, detailed design, resources were collected from over 90 volunteers serving in African countries, photos and stories were prepared, and standards-based learning units were created for K-12 students. This unit, "Water as a Source of Life and Culture," aims to have students uncover the role water plays in daily life. Intended for use with high school students, the unit can be used in visual arts, language arts, and geography classes. Six to eight class periods of 45 minutes each are suggested. The unit lists materials needed, outlines applicable standards, provides essential questions, and gives student objectives. It details day-by-day procedures, assessment activities, and follow-up/enrichment activities. Appended are a map of Africa and handout sheets. (BT)



# *Water: A Source of Life and Culture*

**David McKoski**



<http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/water/africa/lessons/>

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**Water in Africa is a project of Peace Corps World Wise Schools.**

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*Funded through a grant from the Department of Education, the Water in Africa project was realized over a two year period by a team of Peace Corps Volunteers, World Wise Schools' (WWS) classroom teachers, and WWS staff members. Inspired by an idea of one creative WWS teacher, the project eventually expanded into a detailed design. The development and implementation of the design included the collection of resources from over 90 Volunteers serving in African countries, the preparation of those photos and stories, and the creation of standards-based learning units for K-12 students.*

# Water: A Source of Life and Culture

## Description:

Students will use primary and secondary sources to research water as a feature of culture. Using text and photos from Peace Corps Volunteers serving in various African countries students will uncover the role water plays in shaping daily life. Students will analyze the material and create symbols that summarize their findings. Symbols will be collected and arranged to create a contemporary work of art.

**Timeframe:** 6-8 class periods (45-minute each)

**Curricular Areas:** Visual Arts, Language Arts, and Geography

**Grade Level:** High school, grades 9-12

## Materials

- Internet access to Water in Africa Web site (or photocopies of the essays and photos)  
<http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/water/africa/>
- Map of Africa
- Peace Corps video, Postcards from Around the World or To Touch the World
- 5 graphic organizers: "Where Do Artists Get Ideas?"
- "Water in Daily Life: Our Culture"
- "Water In Daily Life: Another Culture"
- "Symbols Of Water: Our Culture"
- "Symbols Of Water: Another Culture"
- "Guiding Questions"
- Evaluation of Art Product
- Chalkboard or overhead projector
- 12"x 24" black construction paper
- Tape or tacks to mount symbols
- Scissors
- X-acto knives (optional)
- Cutting boards (optional)

## Standards

Visual Arts 3-- Knows a range of subject matter, symbols, and potential ideas in the visual arts.

Benchmark-- Applies various subjects, symbols, and ideas in one's artwork

Visual Arts 5. Understands the characteristics and merits of one's own artwork and the artwork of others.

Benchmark-- Understands how various interpretations can be used to understand and evaluate works of visual art.

Language Arts 4. Gather and uses information for research purposes.

Benchmark-- Synthesizes a variety of types of visual information, including pictures and symbols, for research topics.

Benchmark-- Uses a variety of primary sources to gather information for research topics.

Geography 4. Understands the physical and human characteristics of place.

Benchmark-- Understands why places have specific physical and human characteristics in different parts of the world.

### **Essential Questions**

Where do artists get ideas?

How do natural resources define cultures?

How can symbols be used to communicate an idea or concept?

### **Objectives**

Students will:

- Read and analyze primary and secondary sources and interpret how it relates to essential question.
- Record primary and secondary sources about water and create symbols to represent the information.
- Organize the symbols in a format that communicates an idea or concept.

### **Procedure**

#### **Day One**

1. Introduce the activity by distributing the first graphic organizer, "Where Do Artists Get Ideas?" Give students 10-15 minutes to complete the organizer on their own, then incorporate students' ideas into an organizer for the entire class (using the chalkboard or an overhead projector). Emphasize the fact that artists are inspired through different avenues, and artists often must research a topic before creating a work of art. Art not only heightens our aesthetic sensibilities; it can also raise our awareness about specific issues.
2. Inform students that they will create a work of art based on how the natural resource,

water, defines cultures.

3. Ask students to consider how water shapes their daily life, community, and culture. Distribute the graphic organizer, "Water in Daily Life: Our Culture".
4. Use the "Guiding Questions" to help students respond to the topics.
5. Have students present their information, in order to create a class chart. Two methods may be used to collect and record information: (a) Each topic is listed on individual chart paper and posted around the room. Students move from chart to chart recording their responses to each topic without duplicating information. (b) One class chart is created (using the chalkboard or an overhead projector) which includes all topics and each student is asked to respond to one topic.
6. Ask students what conclusions can be made from the information collected. Record this information on a separate chart.
7. Homework (optional): Have students use the same graphic organizer, "Water in Daily Life: Our Culture," to record responses from members of their families.

### **Procedure Day Two**

1. Begin with a review of the first two essential questions, "Where do artists get ideas?" and "how do natural resources define cultures?"
2. Review the class organizer, "Where Do Artists Get Ideas?" (PDF or RTF) and make any additions or changes.
3. Review the class organizer, "Water in Daily Life: Our Culture," and make any additions or changes based upon information gathered from the homework activity.
4. Divide the class into groups of four students and distribute the chart, "Symbols of Water: Our Culture." Have each student in the group choose two topics from their chart "Water in Daily Life: Our Culture," such as recreation or transportation. Instruct the groups to work together to ensure that all topics are covered and there is no duplication of topics.
5. Have each student expand upon the two topics chosen from the chart "Water in Daily Life: Our Culture," and record a more detailed description in the first column titled "What is important" in the chart "Symbols of Water: Our Culture."
6. Introduce the essential question, how can symbols be used to communicate an idea or concept? Ask students to explain the meaning of a symbol. (A symbol is defined as a simplified expression of a complex idea or meaning.) After defining the term, ask students to give examples of symbols that they see on a daily basis. Prompt a discussion with questions such as, Why are symbols used? Can symbols be misunderstood? What would cause misunderstanding of symbols?

7. After students have described in detail what is important about each of the topics using the graphic organizer, have each student draw a symbol to represent the written idea for each of their topics. One of these symbols will be used at the end of the lesson to create a group collage of symbols.

### **Procedure Day Three**

1. After students have completed their organizers about water in our culture, shift the discussion to how water is used in various African countries. Inform students that they will be gather information about water usage in a specific African country. Before doing this research, explain the differences between primary and secondary resources. In this section, students will be using secondary resources to gather information. The secondary resources will be provided by Peace Corps Volunteers who have lived in the specific African country.
2. Show the Peace Corps video, "Postcards From Around the World" (20 minutes) or "To Touch the World" in order to familiarize students with the work of Peace Corps Volunteers. Although students will not personally be interviewing Peace Corps Volunteers they will be using materials written and collected by Volunteers, and should be aware of the work and lives of Volunteers.

### **Procedure Day Four/Five**

1. Working in their original groups, explain to students that they will be using the photos, stories, and fact files from the Water in Africa Web site to uncover information regarding how water defines the cultures of specific African countries. Select an African country for each group to study. (Countries should be selected from different regions of the continent in order to provide students with an understanding of the diversity of cultures and geography found in Africa.)
2. Distribute the graphic organizer, "Water in Daily Life: Another Culture," and ask students to complete the chart on their own, using information from the Water in Africa Web site about their group's specific country. After each student collects country-specific information, tell them to return to their group and share the information they have collected. Using their graphic organizer, "Water in Daily Life: Another Culture," have students record new information gathered from their classmates.
3. Distribute the organizer, "Symbols of Water: Another Culture," explaining that each student in the group should choose two topics from their chart, "water in daily life" (such as recreation or transportation) to complete the section "What is important?" Once again, instruct the groups to work together to ensure that all topics are covered and that there is no duplication.
4. Have each student expand upon the two topics chosen from the chart "Water in Daily Life: Another Culture," and record a more detailed description about its importance in the first column of the chart "Symbols of Water: Another Culture." In order to write a more

detailed description of the topic, students should use the secondary resources of Peace Corps Volunteers from the Water in Africa Web site.

5. After students have written detailed topic descriptions, ask each student to draw a symbol in the second column of the organizer, "Symbols of Water: Another Culture" that represents the written idea for each of their two topics. One of these symbols will be used at the end of the lesson to create a group collage of symbols.

### **Day Six and until complete**

1. Have students choose one symbol from each of the organizers, representing water in our culture, and water in the culture of an African community.
2. Distribute two sheets of black construction paper to each student, asking them to draw the outline of each symbol on separate sheets. Symbols should be cut from the same size paper and should fill the entire piece of paper in order to maintain consistency in size. The neutral black paper is used to achieve high contrast silhouettes and reduces misinterpretation of the symbols. (The use of color would require an additional lesson on color symbolism.)
3. After outlining the symbols, students cut out the shapes. To add more details to the symbol students may cut out shapes within the silhouette to help define the symbol.

### **Assessment**

1. Explain that each group that will be assembling their symbols into a collection that illustrates the question, how does water define cultures? Each group should have two collections of symbols. One collection will communicate how water defines culture in the students' lives and the second collection will communicate how water defines culture in the lives of people from a specific African community.
2. Have students mount their collection of symbols on the wall and begin to consider the meaning created by the collection. Alterations and additions can be made if needed. Collections should be mounted in a manner that will facilitate comparing and contrasting of the two different cultures and regions.
3. The rubric "Evaluation of Art Product" is used by the teacher to evaluate the entire process. Students should self-evaluate by writing about the content of their group's collection of symbols and their individual contribution to design and content.

### **Follow-up/Enrichment Activities**

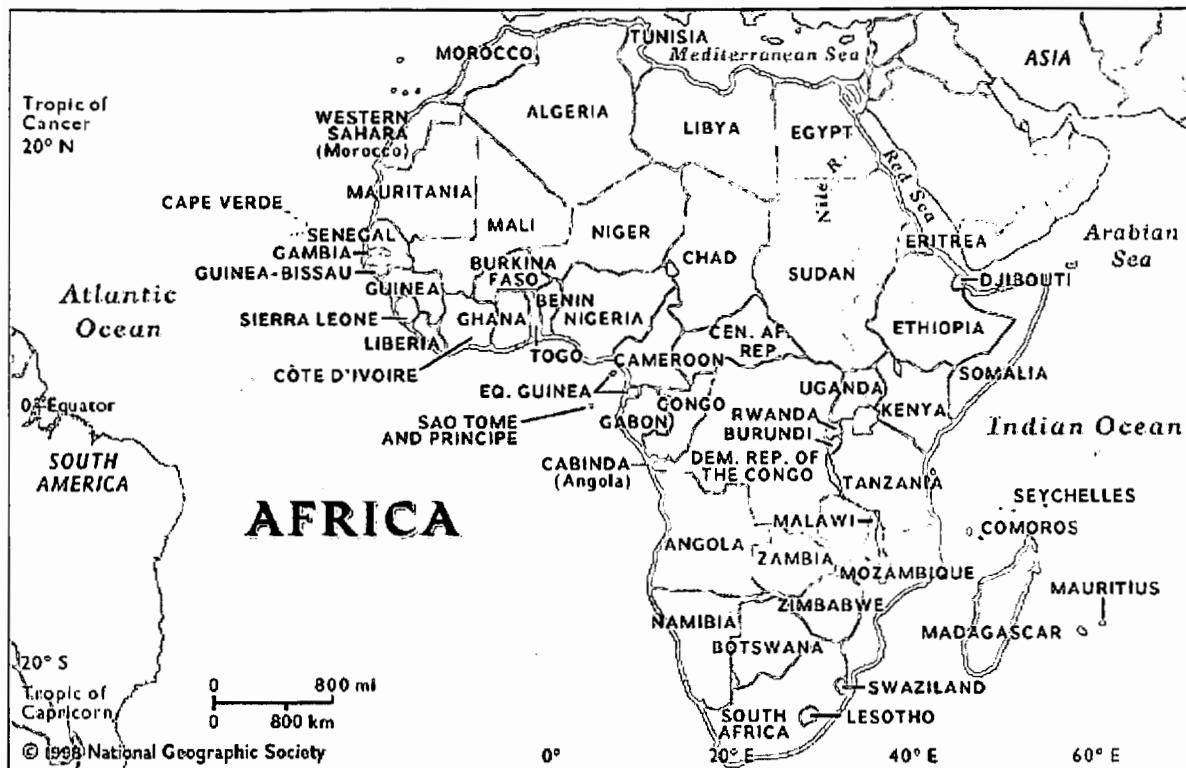
Peace Corps Volunteers may be invited to class to further discuss water as a feature of culture.

## **Additional Resources**

None

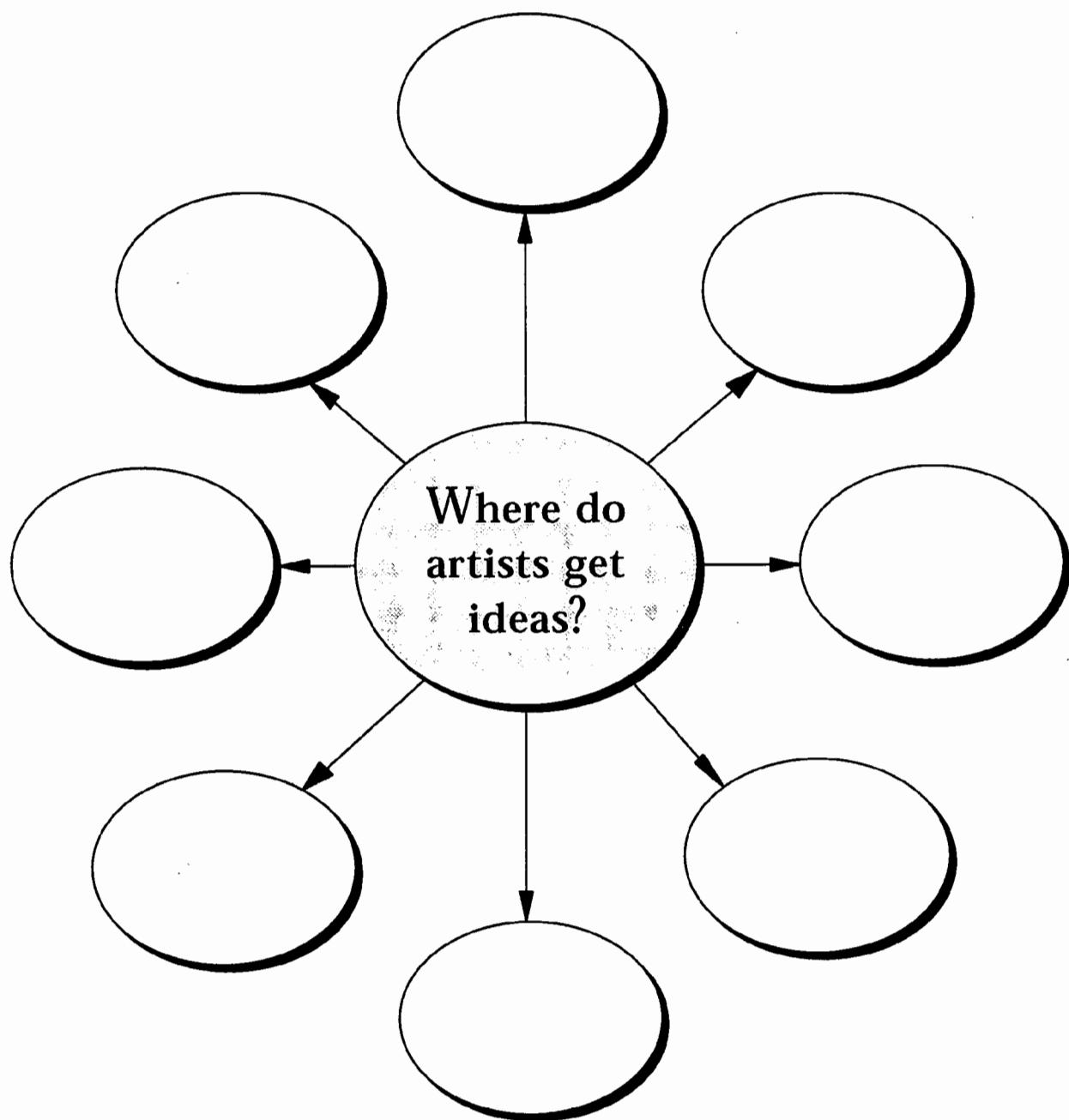
## **About the Author**

David McKoski is teaches Art and Chinese at Roberto Clemente Community Academy in Chicago. He served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Philippines from 1985-87 and is a Peace Corps Fellows graduate from DePaul University Urban Teacher Corps.



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Name \_\_\_\_\_



## Water in Daily Life: Our Culture

City \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

How does water shape my daily life, my community, and my culture?	
Topic: <u>Water and Culture</u>	Topic: <u>Environment/Agriculture</u>
Topic: <u>The Source of Your Water</u>	Topic: <u>Health and Nutrition</u>
Topic: <u>Daily Usage</u>	Topic: <u>Recreation</u>
Topic: <u>Water Conservation</u>	Topic: <u>Transportation</u>

# Water in Daily Life: Another Culture

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_

**How does water shape the daily life, community, and culture of these individuals?**

<b>Topic: <u>Water and Culture</u></b>	<b>Topic: <u>Environment/Agriculture</u></b>
<b>Topic: <u>The Source of their Water</u></b>	<b>Topic: <u>Health and Nutrition</u></b>
<b>Topic: <u>Daily Usage</u></b>	<b>Topic: <u>Recreation</u></b>
<b>Topic: <u>Water Conservation</u></b>	<b>Topic: <u>Transportation</u></b>

## **Symbols of Water: Our Culture**

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **Name** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>What is important?</b>	<b>What is the symbol?</b>
<b>Topic:</b>	
<b>Topic:</b>	

## **Symbols of Water: Another Culture**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Country** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>What is important?</b>	<b>What is the symbol?</b>
<b>Topic:</b>	
<b>Topic:</b>	

# **Guiding Questions**

## **Water and Culture**

How is the value of water in your community reflected in ceremonies (religious or secular) or art, music, folktales, poetry, etc.?

## **The Source of Your Water**

Where does your water come from? What is it like? Describe the general availability of water where you live.

## **Daily Usage**

Describe a day in your life as it relates to water. Include how water is used:

- in your home
- in your community
- in your workplace

## **Environment/Agriculture**

Has the water quality in your area been improved or damaged by changes in your community or the environment?

## **Conservation**

How does your community conserve water? Is it recycled? If so, how and for what purpose?

## **Health and Nutrition**

Is your drinking water fresh? What steps does your community take to make sure it is fresh? What steps do families take to make sure they have access to clean water? If your water is not fresh, how is it contaminated? How does this impact your community?

## **Recreation**

Do children play water games? If so, describe the games. Are water sports popular in your community? If so, describe what is played.

## **Transportation**

Do you live near a lake, river, or ocean? If so, how are these waterways used to travel or transport goods?

## Evaluation of Art Products

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Product: \_\_\_\_\_

Area	Points	Descriptors
Content Accuracy	/	The student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• chose content that was relevant to the essential questions and presented the content accurately.</li><li>• referred to at least four resources to support the information in the end product</li></ul>
Content Depth	/	The student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• demonstrated understanding of non-literal language.</li><li>• was able to compare and contrast collected information</li></ul>
Process	/	The student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• integrated information from essays and photos.</li><li>• accurately completed charts</li><li>• designed symbols in required format</li></ul>
Presentation and Neatness	/	The student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• coordinated with the group in presenting the final installation of the symbols.</li><li>• used proper tools to accurately cut symbols.</li></ul>
Creativity	/	The student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• created original symbols to represent ideas.</li></ul>
Total	/	



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